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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7695th meeting
Wednesday, 25 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/348)

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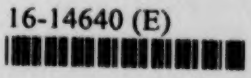

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/348)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/472, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Angola, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/348, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2288 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): As we terminate sanctions today, it is worth recalling how far Liberia has come. Today is the first day that Liberia is not subject to United Nations sanctions since 1992. The current sanctions date from 2003, shortly after Charles Taylor went into exile and a comprehensive peace agreement had been signed. At that time, the Security Council took swift and effective action to establish a strong sanctions regime aimed at supporting Liberia's peace agreement. The sanctions first included an arms embargo, a targeted travel ban and import bans on the principal natural resources that were funding the conflict, namely, round logs and timber products originating in Liberia and rough diamonds from Liberia.

Those innovative natural-resource sanctions, which were carefully tailored to the specific context in Liberia, made a powerful contribution to Liberia's peace and security. The Council adjusted the sanctions as the situation on the ground changed, adding a targeted assets freeze. Importantly, the Council clearly articulated the objectives of those measures, and therefore when it would be prepared to terminate them. The arms and travel sanctions were aimed at supporting the ceasefire, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts and the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as establishing and maintaining stability in Liberia and, more generally, in the region.

The sanctions on diamonds were aimed at preventing diamonds from fuelling the conflict and at supporting the establishment of a certificate-of-origin regime. The timber sanctions were geared towards ensuring that revenues from that industry were not used to fuel conflict. Over time, as the situation in Liberia stabilized and the criteria were progressively met, the Security Council responded by gradually terminating the natural-resource sanctions, scaling back the arms embargo and, finally last year, terminating the targeted sanctions measures. Today, more than 12 years after the end of Liberia's brutal civil war and the Council's imposition of sanctions, Liberia continues to consolidate its progress, and the Security Council has determined that the criteria for lifting the sanctions have been met, thereby allowing us to fully terminate the regime. What lessons can we learn from that history that may be applicable to the threats to international peace and security we face today?

One lesson is that the Security Council must be creative and courageous in its design of sanctions. The Liberia natural-resources sanctions were well-

tailored to the context and demonstrated the Council's determination to address unconventional sources of conflict financing. We would do well to consider similar measures to target the funding and fuelling of conflict in other situations we face today. That is neither unprecedented nor novel. It is effective, and one need look no further than Liberia.

A second lesson is that the effective monitoring and enforcement of sanctions is imperative. The Liberia Panel of Experts, and the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone before it, reported on many issues that States saw as sensitive: organized smuggling networks, trafficking in diamonds and control over and the use of revenues from the timber industry. The sensitivity of that reporting only serves to illustrate the importance of it. The need could not be cleared then, or indeed today, for candid, diligent and detailed reporting in driving the evolution of sanctions to better address the challenges that the international community faces. After all, we establish such panels to provide us with information about situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. We should be ashamed when we prevent them from doing their jobs, as some are doing in other contexts today, even if we disagree with what they have to say.

A third lesson is that the effective collaboration of international partners and mechanisms is key part of making sanctions work effectively. We saw that in Liberia with productive cooperation among the sanctions committee, the Panel of Experts, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the Liberian Government. That was a testament to what can be achieved when sanctions are deployed with purpose, grounded within a clear strategy for promoting international peace and security and coupled with the necessary political progress from Governments.

The fourth and last is less a lesson that a reminder. Sanctions, even the sanctions that last the longest, do not last forever. Sanctions end. We saw another example of that earlier this year with the termination of the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime. Just as we must never hesitate to strengthen sanctions and their enforcement if necessary to address threats to international peace and security, so must we move expeditiously to wind down and end sanctions when they no longer serve the purpose or when they have achieved what was sought. That is not to say that Liberia's work to improve its internal security is finished. In order for Liberia to safeguard the gains achieved over the past 12 years, we encourage the Government to prioritize further capacity-building of its security sector by ensuring that it has the necessary legal framework in place and by continuing to strengthen the capacity of its security agencies to better monitor arms flows, mark weapons and patrol its borders. We encourage the legislature to take the remaining steps to finalize the firearms and ammunition control act, which is an important piece of legislation in order to address gaps in Liberia's legal framework for arms and ammunition management.

But perception is not the goal of a Security Council sanctions regime. Rather, the goal is to address a threat to international peace and security. That is not everything, but it is enough. The United States will continue to work closely with Liberia as it consolidates its progress towards peace and stability. Today we celebrate this transition and the role that the Security Council has played in helping restore peace in Liberia.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2288 (2016). We would like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Mission of the United States for leading the process towards its adoption. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, Chair of the sanctions committee, and the Panel of Experts for their dedicated work.

After a 13-year sanctions regime, Liberia has overcome not only the threat of conflict but also the Ebola crisis that disrupted the country's peacebuilding process and took a devastating toll on the people of Liberia. Japan commends Liberia for its endurance in the face of such difficult challenges.

The issue that remains for Liberia is to build resilient national institutions from which all Liberians — young and old, men and women — can benefit. As yet, certain important security laws, such as the firearms and ammunition control act, have not been enacted. We certainly hope that they will be enacted expeditiously as the first step on the longer journey of institution-building. Such legislation will help to strengthen the capacities of the security sector and build trust between the people and the authorities.

Japan is confident that Liberia's leadership will accelerate the necessary legislative processes with both determination and ownership. We trust that, with the support of the international community, including through the Peacebuilding Commission, Liberia will

serve as a model for overcoming fragility and building sound and resilient institutions.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): As a sponsor of today's resolution 2288 (2016), Ukraine took into account the fact that it is a logical and much-desired outcome of the dedicated efforts of the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community to restore peace and stability in Liberia. Less than a month ago, we took a similar step in completely lifting the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime. Both those countries have travelled a long, hard road to arrive at that juncture. We heartily commend Liberians and Ivorians for their perseverance and genuine commitment to peace, which made our adoption of resolutions 2283 (2016) and 2288 (2016) possible.

We also want to give due credit to the two countries' international partners for helping them to meet the criteria required for the cancellation of sanctions. But there is still a long way to go before sustainable peace and stability are achieved in West Africa, with numerous challenges facing its countries. In order for Liberia to address them, we look forward particularly to seeing it adopt and implement appropriate legislation for managing arms and ammunition, as well as the country's completion of the weapons-marking process. Potential threats of terrorism must be dealt with with an emphasis on the regional context, which is why the Council should remain vigilant and keep a watchful eye on Liberia.

Ukraine is proud to have contributed to the stabilization of Liberia, both through its active participation in the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003). That Committee has now just become history. On behalf of its Chair, I would like to thank all the members of the Committee, the Secretariat and the Panel of Experts for their assistance.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thanks to the joint efforts of the Liberian Government and the international community, Liberia's national reconstruction and economic development have got back on track in the past few years. The Liberian Government has shouldered its responsibility for safeguarding national security and has made progress with security legislation, weapons marking and border control. China appreciates the positive efforts of the Liberian Government and the Liberian people to safeguard national peace and stability, and congratulates them on their achievements in nation-building.

The Security Council has lifted the sanctions on Liberia. That represents the international community's recognition of Liberia's peace process and national development. We hope that the international community will continue to provide Liberia with the assistance it needs to consolidate peace and to bring its national reconstruction and economic development to new levels, on a basis of respect for its national sovereignty.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Mr. Patten (Liberia): I would like to express to you, Mr. President, and to the members of the Security Council the deep gratitude and appreciation of my President and of the Government and the people of Liberia for the unfaltering support that the Council has given us over the years and for its continued engagement with Liberia.

Thirteen years ago, the Council deemed it expedient to institute measures that would not only help to restore peace to Liberia but also ensure the establishment of mechanisms to guide and protect the peace and stability attained. One such measure was the imposition of sanctions under resolution 1521 (2003). The usefulness of sanctions continues to be contested. Some Members of the United Nations believe that they serve no useful purpose. Others insist that they are necessary to address particular situations when they undermine international peace and security.

In the context of Liberia, targeted sanctions were very constructive. The sanctions regime contributed in large measure to the country's stabilization and stimulated post-conflict economic recovery. They targeted some of our natural resources, including timber and diamonds, and imposed restrictions on the supply and importation of arms, on finances and on individuals considered a threat to Liberia's peace and stability. They also targeted individuals who might have engaged in activities aimed at undermining peace and stability.

Liberia played its part in cooperating with the Council over those 13 years. In many instances, capacity constraints inhibited speedy progress. However, the Government is pleased that its work with the Council and its Panel of Experts on meeting their expectations provided it with another opportunity to make Liberia

a safe and stable country for all Liberians, as well as for foreign residents. The Council has been particularly concerned about the enactment of laws regulating firearms. I can now inform the Council that the House of Representatives recently concurred with the Senate in passing the 2015 Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, which establishes a legal framework for managing arms in the country. As a complement to that, we have also passed police and immigration acts.

Liberia would like to once again commend the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003), made up of all the members of the Council, and its various Chairs, with whom we have interacted directly over the years, for their steadfast support. We also thank the Panel of Experts, whose members made many visits to Liberia, neighbouring countries, the subregion and beyond, to monitor and ensure the implementation of the sanctions regime.

Liberia has reached a critical juncture. In the next couple of weeks, the transition, under the transition plan, from the United Nations Mission in Liberia to national security institutions will benefit from another decision by the Council. The termination of the sanctions regime will further motivate the Government in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of national security institutions as they assume their constitutional role of protecting lives and property and safeguarding the territorial integrity of Liberia.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.